

## **CURTIS PARK VILLAGE MOVES FORWARD**

by Rosanna Herber, SCNA President

After years of waiting for movement on Curtis Park Village (CPV), the ball is now rolling at a feverish pace. The Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for the project was released on April 1<sup>st</sup>, the Planning Commission will hold a hearing to discuss the DEIR on May 29<sup>th</sup> and final comments to the DEIR are due by June 1, 2009. If the community and neighborhoods adjacent to the project are not focused, organized and diligent, we will miss a unique opportunity to shape the quality of life for our community for generations to come. Now is the time to get involved.

This 72 acre parcel is the second largest infill development in the city, after the Downtown Rail Yards. Unfortunately, both sites carry the toxic remains of past rail yard operations. The CPV parcel is a Superfund site, yet curiously the DEIR provides little insight on the revised Remedial Action Plan to clean up the hazardous waste at the site. This is a serious omission that should concern every citizen.

Our neighborhood is united in wanting to see this parcel developed in an environmentally safe manner. We are not opposed to adding more housing and commercial space next to the heart of the city. In fact, we are excited about the possibilities of connecting two traditional neighborhoods (Land Park and Curtis Park) along a light rail line that includes a City College with a burgeoning student population. We look forward to neighborhood serving commercial businesses, medium density housing, pedestrian and bicycle friendly pathways and a central public plaza where families and friends can gather to celebrate community, similar to the village squares so popular in Europe and large cities.

But first, the toxic waste in this parcel must be seriously addressed. Then, the staggering increase in traffic that will be generated by the developer's proposed 259,000 sq. ft. of commercial space for a "regional destination shopping center," instead of the 100,000sq. ft. of "neighborhood serving" businesses the SCNA Board requested. Next, the design of this project can't ignore this parcel is adjacent to two light rail stations and represents an extraordinary opportunity to design a transit oriented development that would epitomize the smart growth goals of reducing vehicle emissions, while addressing the impacts of climate change and the rising costs of energy.

The SCNA Board is aware of and understands the general economic conditions developers currently face. We know Mr. Petrovich has spent a bundle cleaning up some of the toxic waste at the site. We wrote a letter of support to help him secure \$4.1 million in Prop 1 C funds to pay for additional hazardous waste clean-up. We will stand with him if he seeks more public funding, not only for clean-up, but for infill housing, transit and infrastructure improvements that will make this project stronger and pencil out. However, we do not believe these financial circumstances should compel us, the city or the community to accept a project that may be financially viable in the short term, but is unsafe or falls short of serving the best interests of the community in the long run.

We, as Curtis Park neighbors, citizens of Sacramento and a part of this wider community, expect a forward-looking project for this unusual infill site. There should be no urgency on our part or the community's part to "take what we can get from this project." We

stand at an unprecedented time in the history of our community. We can make a real difference in the future lives of residents who will join us in caring for and preserving this beautiful neighborhood community. Get involved by contacting us a [NCC@sierra2.org](mailto:NCC@sierra2.org).